

LESSON 4: I AM DANGEROUSLY GOOD

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Jesus was sent to us with a clearly defined “job description,” embedded in a well-known passage from Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.” Here he is describing his mission, and he’s identifying himself as the Messiah who will save us from the captivity of our sin. It’s important to understand how Jesus sees his mission, not how we’ve interpreted it.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- 1. WHAT:** When Jesus proclaimed his “job description” at the start of his public ministry, he gave us a window into his heart and passion for us.
- 2. WHY:** If teenagers understand exactly what Jesus intends to do in their lives, it will set them free.
- 3. HOW:** Students will slow down and pay attention to each aspect of Jesus’ “job description,” unlocking its meaning for them.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Luke 4:18-19

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

John 15:5-6

TEACHING PREP

**LEADER
TIP**

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you’ll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read Luke 4:18-19.

When Jesus opened the Torah in the Nazareth synagogue and read a well-known passage from Isaiah, he planted his stake in the ground and set off a quiet earthquake: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.” Here he is doing more than merely quoting from an Old Testament prophecy—he’s identifying himself directly with the Messiah all Jews had been praying for and hoping for through generations. Contained in these two short verses are the five bullet points in the Messiah’s job description:

1. Preach the gospel to the poor. Here he is not simply describing those who are financially poor—he’s proclaiming the hope of “living water” to those whose souls are dying of thirst.
2. Proclaim release to the captives. Our reality, because of the betrayal of our sin, is that we are prisoners condemned to the death of eternal relational separation from God. And Jesus means to open those prison doors and invite us back into his intimate presence, where we can enjoy him and be enjoyed.
3. Proclaim recovery of sight. We have also been blinded by our sin—we can’t see the “truth that will set us free.” We need his help for everything, including our ability to see him for who he is.
4. Set free those who are downtrodden. Jesus reveals what is at the core of God’s heart: compassion for those who are tempted to hopelessness and who are forgotten and ignored and abused. He is fierce on our behalf.
5. Proclaim a year of Jubilee. In this radical declaration of trust and faith, debts are canceled and celebratory parties spring out of an unburdened people.

This is certainly the most epic job description in history. Embedded in it is a determination to bring rescue and freedom to people living in captivity, whether or not they recognize the bars that enclose them. But he is not some distant conqueror—the “enemy territory” he intends to invade is our own heart. Like a Trojan horse, he wants to sneak past our well-guarded walls and conquer our hardened hearts. He wants to remake us from the inside out. In John 15:5-6 he says: “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.”

This is as blunt as Jesus can be—“Apart from me you can do nothing.” Our life is wholly dependent on attaching ourselves to Jesus, then remaining in him. It’s in this intimate process of grafting that we finally find freedom from our captivity and hope for our life.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What are the five bullet points in Jesus’ job description? Find out tonight!
- Jesus has a five-point mission in your life, and he’s pursuing that mission. Are you ready to discover his determined love for you?

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We’ve finished the last of four lessons that dig deep into how Jesus described himself in Scripture, in a series called “In His Own Words.” We’ve been discovering the ways Jesus “framed” who he is—his purpose, motivation, and intentions.

In this last lesson, we paid “peculiar attention” to the five “bullet points” in Jesus’ job description—this proclamation of his mission kicked off his public ministry. Quoting a prophecy in Isaiah, he said: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.” We explored together the incredible truth that Jesus is determined to set us free from whatever imprisons us. He can’t help himself, because he loves us.

This week, spend a few minutes talking with your teenager about our lesson. Consider asking these questions:

- Which “bullet point” in Jesus’ job description means the most to you, and why?
- It’s hard to think of ourselves as “captives,” but what’s something in your life that makes you feel like a prisoner sometimes?
- Based on his mission statement, what do you know for sure about Jesus?

Thanks for letting us partner with you in this amazing faith adventure. Have a blessed week!

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2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

LEADER
TIP

Each person will need paper and a pencil or pen for the opening activity.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, distribute supplies, and then lead students in this opening activity.

Before you get started, ask students if they have one new thing they discovered about Jesus from their “treasure hunt” this past week. After kids have each had a chance to share, have them think about their life through the lens of this question: “What is my life’s job description?” Have them take a few minutes to write a short job description that captures what’s most important to them and how they live that out each day. After a few minutes, ask students to share their “job descriptions.”

ASK:

- *What’s something you really like about your job description? What’s something you don’t like so much?*
- *If this job description were the only information someone had about you, would that person have an accurate description of who you really are? Why or why not?*
- *If you could replace something in your job description, what would you take out and what would you put in?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus had his own job description—one that he borrowed from a well-known passage in the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Embedded in his job description is a determination to bring rescue and freedom to people living in captivity, whether or not they recognize the bars that enclose them. The “enemy territory” he intends to invade is our own heart. Like a Trojan horse, he wants to sneak past our well-guarded walls and conquer our hardened hearts. He wants to remake us from the inside out.*

TEACHING POINTS

LEADER
TIP

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Luke 4:18-19 together as a group. Because this passage is so brief, consider having students read the verses several times, from different translations of the Bible.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's dig into this "job description" so we have a much better idea of how Jesus sees his mission in our lives.*

1. JESUS PREACHES THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR

ASK:

- *How would you define the words gospel and poor here?*
- *When you're poor, how does that impact your hope?*
- *What does the word preach mean, and in what ways did Jesus do that?*
- *If you were going to "preach the gospel to the poor," what would you say?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus is not simply describing those who are financially poor—he's proclaiming the hope of "living water" to those whose souls are dying of thirst. We are all poor, whether or not we recognize it. And Jesus is our "good news."*

2. JESUS PROCLAIMS RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES

ASK:

- *Who are the "captives" Jesus is talking about, and how did they become captives?*
- *For people like this, what does "release" mean?*
- *Jesus is proclaiming release to people who are imprisoned—what does he do to set them free?*
- *What has Jesus already done, or is right now doing, to set you free?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Our reality, because of the betrayal of our sin, is that we are prisoners condemned to the death of eternal relational separation from God. And Jesus means to open those prison doors and invite us back into his intimate presence, where we can enjoy him and be enjoyed.*

3. JESUS PROCLAIMS RECOVERY OF SIGHT FOR THE BLIND

ASK:

- *What are all the ways people can be blind?*
- *Why would Jesus see us as blind people?*
- *He wants us to "recover" our sight—that implies we could once see things, but now we can't. What kind of sight does Jesus want us to "recover"?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *We have been blinded by our sin—we can't see the "truth that will set us free." We need Jesus' help for everything in our life, including our ability to see him for who he is. It's hard to find your way in the dark, and Jesus wants us to walk through our life with clarity of vision.*

4. JESUS WANTS TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN

ASK:

- *Who do you know who seems “downtrodden” in your life? What has made them this way?*
- *What would it take, realistically, for these people to feel “set free” from what has made them downtrodden?*
- *Is that freedom the same freedom that Jesus is hoping to bring to them? Why or why not?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Here Jesus reveals what is at the core of God’s heart: compassion for those who are tempted to hopelessness and who are forgotten or ignored or abused. He is fierce on our behalf, and he wants us to experience joy in our life.*

5. JESUS IS PROCLAIMING THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Most of us don’t really know what a “year of Jubilee” is even all about. In this radical declaration of trust and faith, every seven years debts are canceled and people are freed from the burden of financial oppression. It’s an incredible, and collective, act of grace.*

ASK:

- *What “debts” is Jesus intending to cancel?*
- *You don’t feel joy over a canceled debt you had no idea you owed—what do you owe to God that you can’t possibly pay?*
- *How have you experienced Jesus “canceling debts” in your own life?*

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- *Read John 15:5-6. What does Jesus mean when he says, “Apart from me you can do nothing”?*
- *What is the “branch’s” responsibility to the “Vine”?*
- *If it’s paramount to stay attached to the Vine, how do we do that on a daily basis?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This is as blunt as Jesus can be: “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Our life is wholly dependent on attaching ourselves to Jesus, and then remaining in him. It’s in this intimate process of grafting that we finally find freedom from our captivity and hope for our life.*

SUMMARY



LEADER
TIP

Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson’s content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come” (Luke 4:18-19).